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ABSTRACT

This report, part of a series of documents which describe assessment of student learning in various curriculum areas from prekindergarten through grade 12 focuses on assessment as practiced in early childhood education in South Carolina. An overview is provided of current practices used in the first few years of schooling that are now being questioned. Subsequent sections describe the early childhood perspective on how children learn, and include guidelines for appropriate curriculum and content in early childhood programs. A comprehensive discussion of assessment practices in early childhood education, including traditional methods and alternative approaches, follows. Among the observational methods discussed are anecdotal records, checklists and inventories, rating scales, and photographs and audio/video recordings. A discussion is also provided of assessment portfolios. A brief summary is given of selected alternative assessment projects and programs in early childhood. Four appendixes contain: (1) guidelines for appropriate curriculum content and assessment; (2) guidelines for the use of standardized tests; (3) observation forms; and (4) examples of a first grade reading record. Contains 25 references. (SLD)

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ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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in the Assessment of Student Learning

March 1993

The South Carolina Center for Excellence in the Assessment of Student Learning was established by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and the College of Education, University of South Carolina

South Carolina Center for Excellence in the Assessment of Student Learning (CEASL)

ASSESSMENT IN STUDENT LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Foreword

This report is part of a series of documents by the South Carolina Center for Excellence in the Assessment of Student Learning (CEASL) to describe assessment of student learning in various school curriculum areas from prekindergarten through grade twelve. The focus of this document is assessment in early childhood education. The report begins with an overview of current practices employed during the first few years of schooling that are now being questioned. Subsequent sections describe the early childhood perspective on how children learn and include guidelines for appropriate curriculum and content in early childhood programs. A comprehensive discussion of assessment practices in early childhood education including traditional methods and alternative approaches follows. Because development in literacy and mathematics is crucial during the early years, a section is devoted specifically to assessment in these areas. Lastly, a brief summary of selected alternative assessment projects and programs in early childhood is provided.

The South Carolina Center for Excellence in the Assessment of Student Learning was established by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and is supported by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and the College of Education, University of South Carolina. The purpose of this Center is to increase awareness among teacher-educators of recent efforts to change approaches used to assess students' learning in pre-school through high school, and to encourage and support efforts to enhance training in testing, measurement and the assessment of students' learning for preservice educators. The Center is based on the educational philosophy that the fair, accurate and informative assessment of students' learning is an integral part of the teaching-learning process.

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Comments or suggestions concerning the information of this report are welcome and may be directed to the authors at the Center.

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Introduction

Research in early childhood education (e.g., Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992; Kamii, 1990) emphasizes the important effect the early years of schooling has on children's development and the child's future school success. Researchers now question many traditional classroom and school practices employed during these early years because many activities and teacher expectations are not consistent with what we know about the development of young children. Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1992) report that practices such as readiness testing for entry into kindergarten, adding transitional first grade classes, and retention in kindergarten and first grade are inappropriate given what we know about the developmental characteristics of young children. Kamii (1990) contends that the overemphasis on standardized testing has led to inappropriate instructional activities such as increased drill, practice, and memorization of isolated skills and the harmful practices of labeling and tracking children. As a consequence, many young children are needlessly struggling and beginning a pattern of "failure" during their first few years of school, not because of a lack of cognitive potential, but because the curriculum goals and instructional approaches do not match their current developmental needs.

Overview of Current Curriculum Goals

How Children Learn: The Early Childhood Perspective

One of the basic premisses of early childhood educators is that curriculum content, teaching practices and assessment approaches should be guided by our knowledge, understandings, and beliefs about how young children learn and develop. Theorists such as Piaget (1965, 1970); Vgotsky (1978); Chomsky (1968) have helped move research and practice away from a behaviorist view of learning to what is called the "constructivist" view (DeVries & Kolberg, 1990). Kamii (1990) describes the constructivist's view of learning as one committed to the belief that "children acquire knowledge and moral values by constructing them from the inside, in interaction with the environment, rather than by internalizing them directly from the environment" (p. 15).

The process of learning is described as a recursive cycle which begins with awareness and then moves through stages of exploration, inquiry, and finally, utilization where learners use and apply what they have learned (Rosegrant and Cooper [1986] as cited in Bredekamp and Rosegrant, 1992). Implicit in the constructivist view is the belief that young children have an inherent desire to learn and make sense of their environment. This motivation to learn is encouraged and increased by engaging children in activities that are responsive to their interests.

Individual variation is a critical general characteristic of all human develop. Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1992) stress the importance of recognizing individual differences in children's growth, development, and learning styles when making curriculum and instructional decisions about young children.

Curriculum Content for Young Children

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) with the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) (1991) have developed a set of guidelines for curriculum content and assessment for children ages three through eight. These guidelines establish appropriate curriculum and assessment practices that reflect a developmental, interactive, and constructivist approach to learning. For example, the curriculum guidelines state that curriculum content for young children should address the whole child including the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains of learning. In addition, the effective curriculum should address a broad range of relevant and attainable content that is engaging and meaningful to the child. A complete listing of the NAEYC and NAECS/SDE Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment is contained in Appendix A.

Assessment of Learning in Early Childhood

The limitations and dangers of standardized testing with young children are described and analyzed by a number of educators (Gnezda, 1991; Kamii, 1990; SACUS, 1990 and others). As was mentioned earlier, Kamii (1990) contends that standardized testing yields limited and sometimes inaccurate information about learners, information which then becomes the basis for educational practices such as labeling, sorting, and tracking. The consequences of test score emphasis may be harmful to children who are channeled into groups where educational experiences are prescribed and often limited by invalid measures of children's abilities and potential.

Seltzer (1989) describes several characteristics of young children that make standardized testing inappropriate with children in the primary grades. Young children often lack test taking skills such as the ability to pace themselves, use machine scoreable sheets, and even read the materials. They are also easily distracted by physical conditions or other motivational distractions. Young children are developing so rapidly during this period that tasks appropriate at the beginning of the year may be inappropriate by the end of the year. The results from a fall testing may not apply to the child when it is used to make placement decisions since standardized tests are not designed to accommodate rapid developmental changes. Standardized testing has negative effects on teachers as well as young children. Grace and Shores (1992) assert that the widespread use and dependence on standardized testing in education has "disempowered and deprofessionalized teachers, who are told that their judgements about the children in their classes are less valuable than the results of standardized tests" (p. 1).

The use of standardized tests has become a tradition because it is necessary to assess young children in order to make instructional decisions. Researchers (Bredekamp and Rosegrant, 1992; Seltzer, 1989) recognize that teachers must have some guidance to make decisions about teaching methods and materials, to identify children who need special services, and to evaluate programs, and communicate with parents. The issue, then, is to find alternatives to paper and pencil, standardized tests, and to initiate more appropriate uses of test information.

Current Trends

The emerging trend is to abandon standardized testing and implement assessment practices that are more developmentally appropriate for young children and more consistent with classroom instruction and curriculum goals (Gnezda, 1991; Hills, 1992; Kamii, 1990; SACUS, 1990). For example, the Southern Association of Children Under Six (SACUS, 1990) calls for "a ban of the routine, mass use of standardized intelligence, achievement, readiness, and developmental screening tests for young children through the age of eight" (p. 12). The Association for Childhood Education International (1991) states the position that "no standardized testing should occur in the preschool and K-2 years" (Perrone, 1991, p. 137). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (1988) recognized the misuses and abuses of achievement, readiness, and developmental screening tests and adopted standardized test guidelines for early childhood professionals. Other organizations have taken a similar position (National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators, 1989; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1989). A listing of the standardized test guidelines from the NAEYC is contained in Appendix B.

A very early statewide effort to stop standardized testing in the primary grades was begun in North Carolina. In 1987, this state stopped standardized testing in the first and second grades after recognizing the overuse and abuse of this practice with young children (Grace & Shores, 1992). Recent events in our society have led politicians to become more aware of the importance of early childhood education and it seems likely that the positions promoted by professional organizations will be considered and will influence policies governing the testing of young children.

Characteristics of Alternative Methods of Assessment

There are several alternative methods of assessment that are more appropriate for young children than paper and pencil standardized tests (Kamii, 1990). To be appropriate, assessment approaches must be geared to the developmental characteristics of young children to provide more complete and thorough evidence of a child's abilities and achievements than a single test score provides. The Southern Association for Children Under Six (1990) outlines general criteria for appropriate assessment.

Criteria for Early Childhood Assessment

Validity.
Should not measure achievement with
only standardized multiple choice items.
Deal with the whole child.
Involve repeated observations.
Continuous over time.
Use a variety of methods.

Concurrently, the National Forum on the Future of Children and Families, in a joint activity with the National Association of State Boards of Education, described key elements of alternative assessment of young children (as cited in Gnezda, 1991). Their position is that appropriate alternative assessments:

> "are based on actual observation and several samples of the child's work;
>
> include information gathered over time from a range of classroom experiences;
>
> indicate a child's broad progress in basic skills, conceptual understanding, problem solving, and reflective thinking, as well as motivation toward learning and attitudes toward school;
>
> are based on an understanding of developmental sequences and individual styles of learning;
>
> are geared toward providing information that helps the teacher teach the individual child" (Gnezda, 1991, p. 15).

The connection and integration of assessment with curriculum and instruction is emphasized in the previously mentioned NAEYC and NAECS/SDE Curriculum Content and Assessment Guidelines for programs serving three through eight year olds (1991). In these guidelines, assessment is defined as "the process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting the work children do and how they do it, as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child" (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE), 1991, p. 21). Appendix A lists the eighteen principles published by NAEYC and NAECS/SDE that should guide assessment procedures for young children for the purposes of planning instruction and communicating with parents. Additional information on guidelines for screening and program evaluation is contained in the NAEYC and NAECS/SDE Position Statement (1991).

Developments in Alternative Assessment

Currently, educators are examining a variety of assessment practices for young children that provide a broad range of information about children's activities and functioning in the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual domains (Hills, 1992). Key words that describe these alternative methods are "observation", "documentation", "authentic", and "performance assessment". Informal methods of assessment such as direct observation, anecdotal records, and portfolios of children's work are being implemented to assess what a child actually knows and can do (Seltzer, 1989). According to Hills (1992) these informal methods of assessment should be the "primary form of assessment in early childhood programs to assure that teaching and assessment are complementary and that developmentally appropriate approaches are employed" (p. 48). Each of these methods is explained in more detail in subsequent sections.

Observational Methods of Assessment

Observational-based assessment seems particularly effective in determining what and how young children are learning (Engel, 1990; Jones & Meade-Roberts, 1990; Teale, 1988). Teachers can collect a wealth of valid and reliable information within daily classroom routines and activities by observing children and documenting the observations. Trained teachers can record descriptive information for later reflection and interpretation. These data provide a basis for making judgements about children and the instructional experiences that would be appropriate for them. Classroom observations must be systematic, objective, selective, unobtrusive, and carefully recorded in order to be effective (Bertrand & Cebula, 1980). Grace and Shores (1992) offer the following guidelines to help teachers become systematic observers.

Guidelines for Systematic Observations

1) Observe exactly what the child does.
2) Record observations as soon as possible.
3) Observe children within a variety of settings and at different times in the school day.
4) Be realistic in scheduling observations.
5) Focus on one child at a time.
6) Avoid being obvious.
7) Protect confidentiality.
8) Choose a workable recording system.

Observational methods offer several advantages over traditional pencil and paper approaches that are especially beneficial for young children. For example, in order to be assessed the child does not have to read or write; the observations can be conducted on specific instructional objectives that are currently being taught; continuous observations may

provide immediate detection of problems instead of waiting until the next scheduled assessment; and observations provide a means of detecting behavior patterns and changes in behaviors (Northwest Regional Education Lab, [1991] as cited in Grace & Shores, 1992). Disadvantages of observational methods include the fact that it is time consuming to record and summarize classroom observations; training and practice on how to observe, record and interpret information is often needed; teachers must have time to conduct observations of children; and information collected must be carefully selected and summarized in order to be useful (Grace & Shores, 1992). Observations must be recorded in order to be useful for assessment purposes. There exists a variety of methods for recording observations such as anecdotal records, checklists, rating scales, photographs, and audio recordings. Each of these methods will be briefly defined and discussed in the following sections.

Anecdotal Records. Anecdotal records are brief nonjudgemental descriptions of an observed activity. The use of direct quotes and descriptions of the child's expressions and gestures are important to include because they provide valuable information for review. A series of records collected over time may be reviewed to gain insight and draw conclusions about a child's progress. Several guidelines may be used to develop useful anecdotal records.

Guidelines for Using Anecdotal Records

Determine what to observe.
Keep the anecdote in context recording the date, time and setting.
Make the anecdote precise and specific.
Keep the anecdote objective.
Keep the recording process simple.

(Grace and Shores, 1992, p. 12)

Checklists and Inventories. The checklist or inventory is one of the easiest and least time consuming tools for recording observations of children. These approaches are most effective when the observed behaviors can be anticipated and the quality of the performance and number of times the performance occurs are not important for assessment. Checklists are developed in advance of the observation and are useful for assessing children in activities found in learning centers and other teacher-initiated activities (Grace & Shores, 1992).

Rating Scales. Rating scales are useful techniques for recording behaviors that have various aspects or components. Behaviors are rated on a scale from a lowest to highest level and the observer decides where to mark the behavior on the scale (Beaty, 1990). Graphical and numerical scales are common formats for recording. Beaty (1990) and Grace and Shores (1992) describe several examples of rating scales and methods of scoring.

Photographs and Audio/Video Recordings. Photographs and audio or video recordings provide concrete evidence of young children's performance in the classroom. Oral reading tapes of a child's first attempt at retelling a story or a photograph of a child's construction with pattern blocks document performances with an accuracy and competence not possible with writing records. Many primary grade teachers recommend keeping a camera loaded with film in order to catch an unexpected sample of a child's developmental progress. There are procedures for assessing oral reading tapes and these methods will be discussed more completely in a later section.

Assessment Portfolios

Portfolio assessment is a procedure in which teacher observations of young children's work combined with the use of portfolios for reflection and evaluation provide the richest source of information about a child's growth and development (Jones and Meade-Roberts, 1990). In early childhood education, the assessment portfolio or process-folio is valued because it provides a record of a child's process of learning. Grace and Shores (1992) define the assessment portfolio as "a collection of a child's work which demonstrates the child's efforts, progress and achievements over time" (p. 5).

In creating portfolios for assessing young children's growth and development, issues such as purposes of use, contents to include, management strategies, and processes for reviewing the portfolios must be considered. Meisels and Steele (1991) cite several important purposes for the use of portfolios with young children.

Purposes of Early Childhood Portfolios

Portfolios:

- foster the integration of instruction with assessment;
- provide students, teachers, parents, and other decision-makers with appropriate information about a child's progress and various classroom activities;
- enable children to participate in the assessment of their own work;
- enable teachers to keep track of individual student's progress; and
- form the basis for evaluating the quality of a child's overall performance from a variety of sources.

Those who have worked with portfolios suggest that examples of a child's work should be the major components of an assessment portfolio. Engel (1990) states that the work samples keep track of children's progress instead of focusing on their failures. Samples of

children's work collected over time provide teachers with concrete evidence of children's abilities, interests, understandings, and perspectives (Engel, 1990; Grace & Shores, 1992). The materials selected for the portfolio may include children's writing samples, including first attempts and finished products (Teirney, Carter, & Desai, 1991); examples of mathematics work; oral reading tapes; artwork; photographs of performance activities; and teacher comments and assessments (Hills, 1992). In managing the contents of a portfolio, Meisels and Steele (1991) suggest that children, individually or in small groups, look through their work about every two weeks or at a minimum of every month and select items to be saved in their portfolios. This provides students an opportunity to learn to evaluate their own progress, recognizing what they have accomplished and identifying what they need to learn. Teachers may also add samples and other pieces of evidence to document a particular skill or developmental characteristic.

The quality of portfolio assessment can be affected by how it is used. Grace and Shores (1992) report that the analysis and interpretation of the portfolio contents is the most important step in the evaluation of a child's development. The contents of the portfolio should be organized in time sequence and by categories. For example, Meisels and Steele (1991) suggest the following categories for organization of a preschool and primary grade portfolio:

I. Art Activities (Fine motor development)

II. Movement (Gross motor development)

III. Math and Science Activities (Concept Development)

IV. Language and Literacy

V. Personal and Social Development

In evaluating a child's achievement, the teacher should always compare the child's current work to the same child's earlier work and then relate the progress toward a standard of performance (Grace & Shores, 1992). This standard must be developmentally appropriate and consistent with the curriculum. It is helpful to place a copy of the program standards/objectives in each child's portfolio so that the teacher can readily note a child's progress in one area or the absence of documentation in another area.

Use of the assessment during parent-teacher conferences is also recommended (Grace & Shores, 1992; Kamii, 1990). In using the portfolio as the basis for discussion when communicating with parents, the parents have concrete samples of their child's work and are not discussing the child's progress in the abstract.

Reports are available about the use of portfolios in early childhood programs in the South Brunswick Public Schools, New Jersey, and in the Redwood City Schools, California (Hills, 1992). The South Brunswick Public Schools K-2 Observation Portfolio currently

emphasizes language arts and includes nine categories of information. The school district is working on a mathematics portfolio and a "Best Work" Portfolio. The early childhood portfolio in Redwood City, California, focuses on mathematics and language arts with observational records for determining social growth. According to Hills (1992), oral reading tapes are currently being pilot tested for inclusion in the portfolio for assessment purposes.

Two resources, The Portfolio and Its Use by Grace and Shores (1992) and The Early Childhood Portfolio Collection Process by Meisels and Steele (1991) provide valuable information with authentic classroom examples for developing and using an assessment portfolio with young children.

Literacy and Mathematics Assessment of Young Children

Experts contend that observational methods and documentation of authentic student performance are the most developmentally appropriate techniques to assess young children's literacy and mathematics development (Chittendon & Courtney, 1989; Kamii, 1990; Teale, 1988). A discussion of these techniques for assessing literacy and mathematics knowledge of young children follows.

Literacy

Teale (1988) characterizes observational methods as the most useful technique for measuring young children's reading and writing knowledge and skills because literacy learning is a complex and developmental process. Thus, the assessment of a child's literacy development must be conducted in a variety of settings and over an extended period of time to ensure an accurate picture of the child's strengths and weaknesses (Teale, 1988).

Chittendon and Courtney (1989) describe a documentation plan as an alternative approach to assessing early literacy development. With the assistance of experienced primary grade teachers, these researchers have developed observational instruments to be used within classroom settings and contexts. Appendix C contains two examples of observational forms developed by Chittendon and Courtney that allow teachers to document and describe children's work, behaviors, and interests in reading within various classroom contexts.

Teale (1988) describes techniques for assessing young children's knowledge of written language, emergent reading of books and stories, writing strategies, and letter-sound correspondence. For example, assessment data on young children's writing can be collected through the use of writing folders which contain one or two samples per week of a child's writing with a record of how the child rereads the piece. By examining a series of samples, teachers can gain developmental information on composing, spelling, and other aspects of writing.

Another recommended strategy is the use of performance sample tasks. Observation and reflection on a child's performance while reading aloud or writing provide teachers with insights into a child's progress toward emerging literacy. Teachers may tape the event or

make notations and comments on a script of the book's text in order to document oral reading (Chittendon & Courtney, 1989). Appendix D contains an example of a teacher's records from an oral reading task. Goodman (1973) describes procedures for scoring oral reading tapes that provide more detailed information.

Mathematics

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (1989) states that the assessment of young children's mathematical knowledge and growth must focus on problem solving strategies, thinking processes, and understandings of mathematical concepts and skills. Similar to literacy assessment, young children's knowledge and understandings in mathematics can be assessed through such events as daily classroom activities, group games, teacher interviews, and recordings in math notebooks. For example, Kamii (1990) suggests that in first grade basic arithmetic skills can be observed by asking children to complete the attendance records and lunch reports. Observing children while they are engaged in group games offers teachers an easy way to assess their arithmetic and reasoning skills. Teacher-child interviews can be conducted in order to collect specific information about a child's progress or developmental level in mathematics. Children's understandings of mathematical concepts can be assessed during interviews by asking them to manipulate objects or blocks in responding to questions. Kamii (1990) describes several interviews assessing a child's understanding of place value and mental arithmetic skills.

Mathematics notebooks or journals are also an effective technique for documenting second and third grader's progress in mathematics over an extended period of time. Children can create or work out "story" problems in their notebooks as well as record attitudes and feelings about their math activities. Teachers can collect the notebooks or specific pages and use for documentation in parent conferences.

Alternative Assessment Projects/Programs

Project Spectrum

Project Spectrum (Krechevshy, 1991) which began in 1984 at Harvard is an innovative approach to assessment in early childhood. The Spectrum assessment battery examines linguistic and mathematical abilities as well as mechanical, spatial, bodily, musical, social and scientific abilities. Documentation is in the form of score sheets, observation, checklists, portfolios and tape recordings. Distinctive features of the Spectrum assessment system (Krechevshy, 1991) include:

a) blurring the line between curriculum and assessment,
b) embedding assessment in meaningful real world activities,
c) using measures that are "intelligence fair",
d) emphasizing children's strengths, and
e) looking at "working styles" of the children.

Currently, Project Spectrum is being implemented in Somerville, Massachusetts, in some first grade classrooms containing a high proportion of at-risk populations.

Cambridge Literacy Project

This project in designed to meet the needs of children from different cultural backgrounds in learning to read and write English. Assessment is performance based and data are collected over time. Assessment techniques such as rating forms, checklists, and inventories are used. The "Emergent Reading Interview" as described in Teale (1988) is a part of this project.

Project Construct

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in collaboration with the University of Missouri Center for Educational Assessment is developing Project Construct as a process-oriented framework for curriculum and assessment of children three to seven years of age. The curriculum is categorized into four domains (i.e., sociomoral, cognitive, representational, and physical) instead of traditional subject groupings. Assessment occurs in two dimensions, formative assessment which guides day to day learning experiences, and summative evaluation which interprets a child's overall developmental accomplishments.

A variety of assessment methods including nonstandardized data gathering tools are used to observe and record children's progress. Materials such as the "Classroom Observational Record", the "Record of Classroom Experiences", the "Indicator Checklist", and "Student Evaluation Form" are unique to this project. A formal standardized assessment called the "Inventory" which includes scoring rubrics and protocols is used to assess each child's progress toward the specified goals. Data from interviews, portfolios, and specific tasks are also used in the Inventory assessment.

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Appendix A

Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment in Programs Serving Children Ages 3 through 8

National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Early Childhood Specialties
in the State Departments of Education

Guidelines for Curriculum Content

1) The curriculum has an articulated description of its theoretical base that is consistent with prevailing professional opinion and research on how children learn.

2) Curriculum content is designed to achieve long-range goals for children in all domains-social, emotional, cognitive, and physical-and to prepare children to function as fully contributing members of a democratic society.

3) Curriculum addresses the development of knowledge and understanding, processes and skills, dispositions and attitudes.

4) Curriculum addresses a broad range of content that is relevant, engaging, and meaningful to children.

5) Curriculum goals are realistic and attainable for most children in the designated age range for which they were designed.

6) Curriculum content reflects and is generated by the needs and interests of individual children within the group. Curriculum incorporates a wide variety of learning experiences, materials and equipment and instructional strategies.

7) Curriculum respects and supports individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Curriculum supports and encourages positive relationships with children's families.

8) Curriculum builds upon what children already know and are able to do.

9) The curriculum provides conceptual frameworks for children so that their mental constructions based on prior knowledge and experience become more complex over time.

10) Curriculum allows for focus on a particular topic or content, while allowing for integration across traditional subject-matter divisions by planning around themes and/or learning experiences that provide opportunities for rich conceptual development.

11) The curriculum content has intellectual integrity; content meets the recognized standards of the relevant subject-matter disciplines.

12) The content of the curriculum is worth knowing; curriculum respects children's intelligence and does not waste their time.

13) Curriculum engages children actively, not passively, in the learning process.

14) Curriculum values children's constructive errors and does not prematurely limit exploration and experimentation for the sake of ensuring "right" answers.

15) Curriculum emphasizes the development of children/s thinking, reasoning, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities.

16) Curriculum emphasizes the value of social interaction to leaning in all domains and provides opportunities to learn from peers.

17) Curriculum is supportive of children's physiological needs for activity, sensory stimulation, fresh air, rest, hygiene, and nourishment/elimination.

18) Curriculum protects children's psychological safety.

19) The curriculum strengthens children's sense of competence and enjoyment of leaning by providing experiences for children to succeed from their point of view.

20) The curriculum is flexible so teachers can adapt to individual children or groups.

Source: NAEYC and NAECS/SDE. (1991). Position statement on guidelines for appropriate curriculum content and assessment in programs serving children ages 3 through 8. Young Children, 46(3), 21-38.

Appendix A (continued)

Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment in Programs Serving Children Ages 3 through 8

National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Early Childhood Specialties
in the State Departments of Education

Guidelines for Appropriate Assessment

1) Curriculum and assessment are integrated throughout the program; assessment is congruent with and relevant to the goals, objectives, and content of the program.

2) Assessment results in benefits to the child such as needed adjustments in the curriculum or more individualized instruction and improvements in the program.

3) Children's development and learning in all the domains-physical, social, emotional, and cognitive-are informally and routinely assessed by teachers observing children's activities and interactions, listening to them as they talk, and using children's constructive errors to understand their learning.

4) Assessment provides teachers with useful information to successfully fulfill their responsibilities.

5) Assessment involves regular and periodic observation of the child in a wide variety of circumstances that are representative of the child's behavior in the program over time.

6) Assessment relies primarily on procedures that reflect the ongoing life of the classroom and typical activities of the children.

7) Assessment relies on demonstrated performance, during real, not contrived activities.

8) Assessment utilizes an array of tools and a variety of processes including but not limited to collections of representative work by children, records of systematic observations by teachers, records of conversations and interviews with children, teachers' summaries of children's progress as individuals and as groups.

9) Assessment recognizes individual diversity of learners and allows for differences in styles and rates of learning.

10) Assessment supports children's development and learning.

11) Assessment supports parents' relationships with their children and does not undermine parents' confidence in their children's or their own ability.

12) Assessment demonstrates children's overall strengths and progress, what children can do, not just their wrong answers or what they cannot do or do not know.

13) Assessment is an essential component of the teacher's role.

14) Assessment is a collaborative process involving children and teachers, teachers and parents, school and community.

15) Assessment encourages children to participate in self-evaluation.

16) Assessment addresses what children can do independently and what they can demonstrate with assistance.

17) Information about each child's growth, development, and learning is systematically collected and recorded at regular intervals.

18) A regular process exits for periodic information sharing between teachers and parents about children's growth and development and performance.

Source: NAEYC and NAECS/SDE. (1991). Position statement on guidelines for appropriate curriculum content and assessment in programs serving children ages 3 through 8. Young Children, 46(3), 21-38.

Appendix B

Guidelines for the Use of Standardized Tests

National Association of the Education of Young Children

The following guidelines are intended to enhance the utility of standardized tests and guide early childhood professionals in making decisions about the appropriate use of testing.

1) All standardized tests used in early childhood programs must be reliable and valid according to the technical standards of test development (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1985).

2) Decisions that have a major impact on children such as enrollment, retention, or assignment to remedial or special classes should be based on multiple scores of information and should never be based on a single test score.

3) It is the professional responsibility of administrators and teachers to critically evaluate, carefully select, and use standardized tests only for the purposes for which they are intended and for which data exists demonstrating the test's validity (the degree to which the test accurately measures what it purports to measure).

4) It is the professional responsibility of administrators and teachers to be knowledgeable about testing and to interpret test results accurately and cautiously to parents, school personnel, and the media.

5) Selection of standardized tests to assess achievement and/or evaluate how well a program is meeting its goals should be based on how well a given test matches the locally determined theory, philosophy, and objectives of the specific program.

6) Testing of young children must be conducted by individuals who are knowledgeable about and sensitive to the developmental needs of young children and who are qualified to administer tests.

7) Testing of young children must recognize and be sensitive to individual diversity.

Source: NAEYC Position Statement on Standardized Testing of Young Children 3 Through 8 Years of Age, Young Children, March, 1988, pp. 42-47.

Appendix C

Observation Forms

Description of child's work and behavior for each contest
(cite specific indications of skills or knowledge)

Settings and Activities	Examples of Child's Activities
Story Time: Teacher reads to class (responses to story line; child's comments, questions, elaborations)	
Independent Reading: Book Time (nature of books child chooses or brings in; process of selecting; quiet or social reading)	
Writing (journal stories, alphabet, dictation)	
Reading Group/Individual (oral reading strategies: discussion of text, responses to instruction)	
Reading Related Activities Tasks (responses to assignments or discussion focusing on word letter properties, word games/ experience charts)	
Informal Settings (use of language in play, jokes, story-telling, conversation)	
Books and Print as Resource (use of books for projects; attention to signs, labels, names; locating information)	
Other	

Source: Chittendon and Courtney, (1989), p. 110)

Appendix C

Observation Forms

Child _____ Grade _____ Teacher _____ Date _____

Ratings of child's interest in different classroom contexts
(based on observations over a period of several weeks)

Settings and Activities	Degree of Interest/Investment		
	Very Interested, Intense	Moderately Interested	Uninterested, Attention is Elsewhere
Story Time: Teacher reads to class (responses to story line; child's comments, questions, elaborations)	___ ___	___ ___	___ ___
Independent Reading: Book Time (nature of books child chooses or brings in; process of selecting; quiet or social reading)	___ ___	___ ___	___ ___
Writing (journal stories, alphabet, dictation)	___ ___	___ ___	___ ___
Reading Group/Individual (oral reading strategies: discussion of text, responses to instruction)	___ ___	___ ___	___ ___
Reading Related Activities Tasks (responses to assignments or discussion focusing on word letter properties, word games/ experience charts)	___ ___	___ ___	___ ___
Informal Settings (use of language in play, jokes, story-telling, conversation)	___ ___	___ ___	___ ___
Books and Print as Resource (use of books for projects; attention to signs, labels, names; locating information)	___ ___	___ ___	___ ___
Other	___ ___	___ ___	___ ___

Source: Chittendon and Courtney, (1989), p. 111

Appendix D

Example of a First Grade Reading Record

/... Once upon a time, there was a little

red hen/who lived in a/farmyard.

One day the little red hen

found some/grains of weat.

She took them to the ~~other~~ orange

animals in the farmyard.

"Who will help me to plant

those gardens

~~these grains~~ of wheat?" asked

the little red hen.

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the rat.

"Not I," said the pig.

child	text
farm	farmyard
orange	other
those	these
gardens	grains

Source: Chittendon and Courtney, (1989), p. 114

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